IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of Norman Ken OUCHI   Examiner: George C. Neurauter

Serial No.:   10/037,545   Confirmation No.: 7992

Filed: December 21, 2001   Group Art Unit: 2143

For: **WORKFLOW SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

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COMMENTS ON STATEMENTS OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

A first Examiner's Amendment was attached to the 1st Supplemental Notice of Allowance mailed March 10, 2009 for the above-identified application (hereafter "First Examiner's Amendment"). Additionally, a second Examiner's Amendment was attached to the 2nd Supplemental Notice of Allowance mailed April 29, 2009 for the above-identified application (hereafter "Second Examiner's Amendment").

Although the reason for issuing the Supplemental Notices of Allowance related to the first and second Examiner's Amendments is not formally specified in any of the Examiner's correspondence, it should be noted that the Examiner verbally indicated that an amendments to independent claims 1, 2 and 32 were needed to overcome concerns under 35 U.S.C. § 101 that were identified after the original Notice of Allowance was mailed on February 11, 2009.

The First Examiner's Amendment

As discussed between the Examiner and the undersigned, the First Examiner's Amendment was never operative, and has been withdrawn for the following reason. The First Examiner's Amendment indicated an amendment to the preambles of independent

claims 1, 2 and 32, which originally read "A workflow system, comprising...", to then read, "A workflow system stored within a memory, comprising..." The Examiner stated that "[a]uthorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jennifer Volk [the undersigned] on 9 March 2009." First Examiner's Amendment, Page 2. While the "stored within a memory" language was discussed during the telephone interview between the Examiner and the undersigned, the undersigned did not authorize any changes to the claims.

Because the First Examiner's Amendment was never authorized, it should be rendered void and have no bearing in the prosecution history of the above-identified application.

The Second Examiner's Amendment

The Applicant agrees that the pending claims, as amended by the second Examiner's Amendment, are allowable. The second Examiner's Amendment was authorized by the undersigned during a telephone interview with the Examiner on April 15, 2009. Therefore, the amendments made in the second Examiner's Amendment are effective. The undersigned and the Examiner agreed to reverse the first Examiner's Amendment. Additionally, the undersigned authorized the Examiner to amend independent claims 1, 2, and 32 to include "a memory" and "at least a portion of the form route manager including at least a portion of the memory..." The Examiner, as implied by the 2nd Supplemental Notice of Allowance, and the Applicant agree that such amendments are sufficient to overcome concerns under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Allowed Independent Claims

For your reference and clarity, a clean version of the allowed independent claims are included below.

1.   A workflow system, comprising:
      a memory;
      a form route manager for receiving and sending email according to a route, the route comprising a step-by-step sequence of email addresses, at least a portion of the

form route manager including at least a portion of the memory, wherein the form route manager includes:

an in-box adapted to receive email;

a first sequencer adapted to as follows:

compare a step field of the email with the route,

define the next email address based on the compare,

update the email address to the next email address,

update the step field to the next step; and

an out-box adapted to send the email without the route to the next email address.

2.   A workflow system, comprising:

a memory;

a form route manager for receiving and sending email according to a route, the route comprising a step-by-step sequence of email addresses, and for managing a project to role to email address table, at least a portion of the form route manager including at least a portion of the memory, wherein the form route manager includes:

an in-box adapted to receive email;

a first sequencer adapted to as follows:

compare a step field of the email with the route,

define the next email address based on the compare,

update the email address to the next email address,

update the step field to the next step; and

an out-box adapted to send email to the next email address.

32.   A workflow system, comprising:

a memory;

a form route manager configured to send and receive email according to a route, the route being a step-by-step sequence of email addresses, at least one of an identity of each email address from the email addresses or an order of email addresses within the

step-by-step sequence of email addresses being automatically-generated, the form route manager configured to communicate with a project management system, at least a portion of the form route manager including at least a portion of the memory, the form route manager including:

an in-box adapted to receive email;

a first sequencer adapted to as follows:

compare a step field of the email with the route,

define the next email address based on the compare,

update the email address to the next email address,

update the step field to the next step; and

an out-box adapted to send email to the next email address, wherein the form route manager sends a message to the project management system at a project segment.
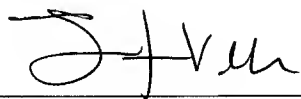
This statement commenting on the Examiner's Amendment is timely submitted.

Dated: 5|7|09

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